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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 21 February 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Gaspar Martins ..... (Angola)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/1/OC/8)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Calendar of events for January-July 2007

2. **The Chairperson** said he took it that the Organizational Committee wished to approve the calendar of events of the Commission for the period January-July 2007, on the understanding that it was provisional and subject to alteration in the light of the availability of conference services.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **Mr. Attiya** (Egypt), noting that a donor round table on Burundi had been scheduled for 28 and 29 March 2007, said that he hoped that the delays in the preparation of an interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for Burundi, focusing on bridging the gap between the humanitarian phase and socio-economic recovery, would not delay the planned donor round table and field visit to that country.

5. **Ms. McAskie** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support) said that, while the field visit to Burundi had been intended to take place immediately before the donor round table, in order to increase the opportunity for delegations to participate in both events, the Government of Burundi had indicated that it would be extremely occupied at the end of March 2007 and that it might be advisable for the field visit to be deferred until 10-14 days after the round table. The matter should be discussed further by the country-specific meeting for Burundi and by that country's Government.

Integrated peacebuilding strategies

6. **The Chairperson**, recalling that the Organizational Committee had discussed a new draft of the concept note on the design of integrated peacebuilding strategies earlier that day, indicated that that new draft would be made available in advance of the country-specific meetings scheduled for the end of February 2007.

Arrangements for field visits by the Commission

7. **The Chairperson** recalled that preliminary discussion of field visits had already taken place during the Commission's country-specific meetings, paving the way for the Organizational Committee to discuss them in greater depth. The Organizational Committee must take decisions on the options and issues contained in the Peacebuilding Support Office paper of 15 February 2007 containing draft terms of reference for those visits; they included the composition and funding of the visiting delegations.

8. **Ms. McAskie** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support) said that, as the draft terms of reference for the visits indicated, enough funding was available from donors, as distinct from the Peacebuilding Support Office's resources, to cover the participation of up to four members of the Commission in each field visit. The actual number of participants would depend on whether they were selected by region, by electoral group or according to some other method. Account should be taken of the likelihood that the costs of the Chairpersons of the country-specific meetings, and possibly other participants, would be covered by their Member States of origin. The Organizational Committee should also bear in mind that costs had been estimated on the basis of visits not exceeding seven days, including two days for outward and two days for return travel.

9. **The Chairperson** recalled that the draft terms of reference for field visits proposed three options for the selection of visit participants: representation by region, plus one additional member of the applicable country-specific meeting; representation by electoral group, plus one additional member of the applicable country-specific meeting, or another option proposed by the Member States.

10. **Mr. Miller** (United States of America) expressed the hope that the Commission could be certain that its resources were contributing to its goals and that the States concerned genuinely welcomed field visits. In the specific cases of the visits to Burundi and Sierra Leone, he asked what wishes those countries had themselves expressed regarding substance and goals. Recalling that the Commission had discussed how to engage with stakeholders, he wondered whether visits would focus on that task or serve more as fact-finding and awareness-raising missions, and, accordingly, whether the visiting delegation would make provision for outreach to the public and the media.

11. **The Chairperson** said that, while it was for the Commission to decide on the goals of the field visits, the authorities of Burundi and Sierra Leone had

emphasized the value they placed on outreach and exposure to the realities of post-conflict situations.

12. **Mr. Abdul Azeez** (Sri Lanka) said that his delegation would not express a view on the merits of the proposed field visits, but believed that the country to be visited must give clear consent. His delegation would join whatever consensus emerged regarding the method of selecting the visiting delegation.

13. **Mr. Wegter** (Netherlands) said that, as the Chairperson of the country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, he wished to emphasize that the authorities of Sierra Leone had requested a field visit. In addition to sending a positive political signal of engagement with the country, the visit would present an opportunity for dialogue with representatives of Government and civil society, and also have a public-relations dimension, providing an opportunity to explain — for example — the relationship between the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission.

14. **Mr. Kodera** (Japan) said that his delegation believed that the Organizational Committee must have a clear view of the purpose of and expenditure on the field visits. It welcomed the efforts of the Peacebuilding Support Office to obtain resources, but wondered how secure such arrangements were, and whether they should be regarded as a precedent in planning future field visits. It would like to know whether volunteers — in other words, individuals bearing their own costs — could take part in visits if there was sufficient logistical support to accommodate them.

15. **Mr. Attiya** (Egypt) said that, as States' ownership of the peacebuilding process was vital, the Organizational Committee must be certain that Burundi and Sierra Leone welcomed field visits. Perhaps that could be confirmed in a letter to the Chairperson from their respective permanent representatives. While his delegation would join the consensus on the option for selecting participants in field visits, it believed that representation by region was more viable than representation by electoral group, which risked producing too great a concentration of States from a particular geographical area.

16. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana), expressing his delegation's support for field visits, recalled that the draft terms of reference for field visits listed objectives which included engaging with national Governments and all relevant stakeholders. He wondered whether that included international stakeholders, and whether they would participate in the visits.

17. **Mr. Toledo** (Chile), indicating that his delegation strongly supported field visits, asked whether account had been taken of the capacity of Burundi and Sierra Leone to host potentially large visiting delegations at such a sensitive period in their history. As the Burundian authorities had pointed out that they would be very busy around the forecast date of the field visit, the visit clearly involved sacrifices for the hosts. Such matters should be considered when the Organizational Committee discussed methods of selecting participants, including volunteers. The Organizational Committee must also ensure that it clearly stated the objectives of each visit. In the light of the reference made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support to the amount of travel time allocated to the proposed visits, he asked whether the Commission expected to be able to present a meaningful report on the basis of a three-day visit.

18. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of Sierra Leone had asked to participate in the discussion of the item under consideration.

19. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone) took a place at the Committee table.*

20. **Mr. Rowe** (Sierra Leone) said that the Commission had already amply addressed the rationale for field visits. The Organizational Committee should move on to discussing the specific details of those visits. As the Commission reflected the engagement of the international community, it could not act effectively if it was confined to New York. Visits must include outreach to interact with stakeholders, particularly civil society organizations, and particularly women. The aim was not for the Commission to visit Government officials and parliamentarians, but rather for it to interact with peacebuilding groups such as the National Commission for Social Action.

21. His delegation suggested that the Commission should provide a press kit for its visit to Sierra Leone. His country's vibrant press, consisting of some 34 newspapers, had rapidly reported the earmarking of peacebuilding resources. Confirmation that those resources were being used for their intended purpose would reassure the public that the Sierra Leone Government had not simply diverted the funds for another use. His delegation also supported the proposal

of the representative of Japan for volunteer participants to join the visiting delegation.

22. *Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone) withdrew.*

23. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that his delegation, having examined the three options for selection of visit members in the 2007 field visit draft terms of reference, found representation by region to be the most democratic solution. Recalling the concern of the representative of Chile about States' ability to host Peacebuilding Commission visits, he wished to assure the Organizational Committee that Burundi was able to accommodate a visit. In his delegation's view, transparency vis-à-vis the public could be maintained by holding a press conference on the last day of the visit.

24. **Ms. McAskie** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support) said that the field visits could be funded in a number of ways. One option, which the Commission might wish to select for the first two visits, was to use funding from donor sources. Another option, which she had proposed at an earlier meeting, was for provision to be made in the peacebuilding budget for 2008-2009. In her view, donor funding was bound to be available from time to time. However, it was up to the Commission to decide how to fund such visits.

25. The composition of the Commission delegation was also a matter for the Commission to decide and would depend on which formula for selecting field visit participants was chosen. She suggested that those entities not planning to participate in the trip but which had representation on the ground could be fully associated with the visit. Indeed, such a practice was common and had been used in the past.

26. Responding to the representative of Ghana, she said that she would be very surprised if international stakeholders were not present during the visit, as they were very keen to meet with members of the Commission. The problem, in her view, would be whether there were enough hours in the day. There was no doubt in her mind that the visit would be a major event.

27. Responding to the representative of Chile, she said that both Governments had expressed their eagerness for the Commission to visit. The visits were not expected to place a strain on local capacity, as it was the respective United Nations Country Team that arranged such matters as accommodation, transportation and schedules; they, then, bore most of the burden. According to the usual procedure, a joint committee composed of the Government concerned and the respective United Nations Country Team would be set up to identify what needed to be done.

28. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of the World Bank had asked to participate in consideration of the item.

29. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Avalle (World Bank) took a place at the Committee table.*

30. **Mr. Avalle** (World Bank) said that his organization would be more than happy to be associated with the Commission's first two field visits, provided it was given enough lead time to make the necessary arrangements.

31. *Mr. Avalle (World Bank) withdrew.*

32. **Mr. Mendes Nina** (Brazil) said that it was important that the Commission delegation had enough time to meet with all stakeholders, including civil society, and not just Government representatives. The two Governments concerned should indicate how many days were needed for that. As for the composition of the team, his delegation did not object to members participating voluntarily in the visits, if they so wished. However, it was important to take account of regional criteria, so as to ensure that all regions were represented equally.

33. **Mr. García González** (El Salvador) said that field visits were very important, as they would demonstrate the Commission's support for the peacebuilding process, enable its members to gain first-hand knowledge of the situation on the ground and provide valuable input for future discussions. He supported the proposal that the delegation should report back to the rest of the Commission upon its return, as it would enable those members who had participated in the visit to share their impressions with those who had not. His delegation was also in favour of selecting participants on the basis of regional representation. It was important to give the impression that the international community as a whole was represented.

34. **Ms. Liu** Jia (China) agreed with the Egyptian proposal that the Commission should receive a formal letter of invitation from the two Governments concerned. The practice, which was a good one, should

be followed each time a visit took place. She also agreed that the delegation should report back to the Commission upon its return, either in the form of a written report or an oral briefing.

35. **Mr. Deruffe** (France) noted that the paper that had been circulated referred to the visits as Peacebuilding Commission field visits in one place and Peacebuilding Commission members' field visits in another. It was important to be clear about the nature of the visits. To call the visits "Peacebuilding Commission visits" was misleading and might create unrealistic expectations. Elsewhere again, the paper stated that the delegation would be composed of the Vice-Chairperson of the respective country-specific meeting plus a small group of Peacebuilding Commission members. He proposed using that language when referring to the visits, as it was more accurate and would make it clear that the idea was to report back to the respective country-specific meeting. In that connection, he agreed that the delegation should submit a written or oral report to the Commission upon its return.

36. Regarding which formula should be used for selecting participants, he recalled that General Assembly resolution 60/180 presented a very complex formula for the composition of the Organizational Committee, including seven members of the Security Council; seven members of the Economic and Social Council; the five top providers of assessed and voluntary contributions; the five top providers of military personnel and civilian police; and seven members elected by the General Assembly. While he did not object to selecting participants on the basis of regional representation, he was concerned that it would not reflect the formula set out in the resolution. The issue needed to be looked at closely, especially because, as the Commission picked up speed, other countries were likely to be added to its agenda.

37. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) said that the delegation should indeed report back to the Commission upon its return, whether orally or in writing. However, the purpose of the visits should not be to generate a report, but to obtain first-hand information about the situation on the ground, meet people in the country and assess whether the Commission's strategy was working.

38. Responding to the representative of France, he said that it did not matter what the visits were called; it was clear that "Peacebuilding Commission field visit" meant a visit by a delegation from the Peacebuilding Commission. What was important was that all regions were represented.

39. The proposal that the Commission should be sent a formal letter of invitation, meanwhile, seemed to be a simple matter of protocol. The Commission had every right to visit the countries on its agenda, provided those countries wished it to do so.

40. **Ms. Zubčević** (Croatia) said that the field visits, while very important, must be thought through properly. She agreed that the generation of reports should not be the main aim. Reports were important because they would enrich the work being done in New York.

41. As for whether or not the Commission should be sent a formal letter of invitation, she proposed drawing on the experience of previous Security Council missions. In her view, however, it was not necessary, as both Governments seemed to welcome a visit by the Peacebuilding Commission.

42. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of Sierra Leone had asked to participate in consideration of the item.

43. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone) took a place at the Committee table.*

44. **Mr. Rowe** (Sierra Leone) said that his Government had stated on several occasions that it welcomed a visit by the Peacebuilding Commission. Moreover, his Government had recently been asked to formally invite a number of human rights special rapporteurs to the country; it had refused, arguing that they were free to visit Sierra Leone at anytime. That said, such a letter could be sent if the Commission so wished. In his view, however, it was not necessary.

45. *Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone) withdrew.*

46. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that his Government could send a formal letter of invitation as well, if that was the wish of the Commission. However, his Government had stated on several occasions that the Commission was most welcome to visit.

47. **The Chairperson** said that there seemed to be agreement that the first two field trips would go ahead, as planned; that they would be called Peacebuilding Commission field visits; that they would be jointly agreed by the Commission and the Government

concerned; that no formal letter of invitation was required; that participants would be selected on the basis of regional representation; and that candidates would be identified no later than 1 March. He emphasized that such arrangements applied to the first two visits only and might well change in the future. The funding aspect, in particular, would have to be discussed further.

48. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission wished to proceed accordingly.

49. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

50. **Mr. Attiya** (Egypt) wished to know when delegations could expect to receive the information on the Peacebuilding Fund that had been promised at the informal meeting that morning.

51. **Ms. McAskie** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support), recalling that the morning meeting had discussed the relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, said that she would consult members individually before coming back to the Commission for a broader discussion.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.